(b) whether annual allocation for repair and maintenance of National Highways in the State has constantly been decreasing;

(c) if so, whether Government are aware that in the absence of maintenance and repair, most of the National Highways in Himachal Pradesh are in a bad condition; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The amount sanctioned for repair and maintenance of National Highways in the State of Himachal Pradesh during the last four years is given below:—

Year	Sanctioned Amount (Rs. in crore)
2002-2003	14.03
2003-2004	14.15
2004-2005	18.73
2005-2006	24.10

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Safety of nuclear materials

1639. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to encourage private participation, including from abroad, in the country's ambitious nuclear power programme, to generate 20,000 mw of power by 2020;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the safeguards that are proposed to be worked out to secure safety to nuclear materials in private hands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) The Atomic Energy Act, 1962 presently allows setting up of nuclear power stations only by Government

companies. Two Government Companies, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI) are presently engaged in setting up and operating nuclear power reactors. With respect to the amendment of the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, no final decision has been taken.

(c) Does not arise.

Allocation of captive coal blocks

1640. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Centre and States are divided on revision on coal that is unchanged sicne August, 2002;

(b) whether Prime Minister at a meeting directed Coal Ministry to review screening criteria in awarding coal blocks for speedy allocation of captive coal blocks and suggested perference be given to power generating companies;

(c) whether it was decided that Coal Ministry would submit report of de-reservation of coal blocks reserved exclusively for CIL to Prime Minister;

(d) whether any interim report has been submitted; and

(e) if so, whether any final decision has been taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) The Government had constituted a Committee on 02.06.2005 to consider revision of rates of royalty on coal and lignite. In this connection views of all State Governments were obtained. The major coal producing States are in favour of royalty on coal and lignite on *ad-valorem* basis whereas the coal consuming States are in favour of continuation of tonnage based royalty regime.

(b) It has been decided by the Government to give priority to the power sector in allocation of coal blocks. It has further been decided that preference in allocation should be given to power projects of 500 MW and above and steel making capacity of one million tonnes and above.

(c) to (e) The Energy Coordination Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister had taken a decision to de-reserve such coal blocks from the list of coal blocks reserved for CIL which are